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PATRICK-MURRAY ADMINISTRATION ANNOUNCES
NEARLY \$8 MILLION IN GRANTS TO SPUR
DEVELOPMENT OF 21 LOCAL PARKS

BOSTON – From a harborwalk in Barnstable to a renovated stadium and ballfield in Pittsfield, the Patrick-Murray Administration today announced 21 grants for roughly \$7.8 million to help communities across the Commonwealth create or improve municipal parks.

“Open spaces help define the character and improve the livability of our cities and towns, and investing into our system of parks across the entire Commonwealth will

allow residents to enjoy nature and engage in recreational activities within their communities,” said Governor Patrick.

The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs’ Urban Self-Help Program grants are available for the acquisition of land, as well as construction and renovation of property for park and outdoor recreation purposes such as athletic play fields, playgrounds and game courts. Including construction grants funded last year, current standing commitments in the Urban Self Help pipeline total nearly \$14 million.

“I am delighted we are able put these resources toward parks across the Commonwealth,” said Lieutenant Governor Murray. “These projects are examples of how we can accomplish great things when municipalities and the state work together on common goals.”

Today’s grant announcement comes on the 30-year anniversary of the establishment of Urban Self-Help, a program that helps cities and towns acquire and develop parkland and renovate existing parks. Grants are offered on a competitive basis and pay at least half or up to 70 percent of a project’s total cost depending upon the income level and other demographics of municipalities.

The grants are issued over a two-year period, with funding typically split between planning and design costs the first year and construction the second year. Selected projects must include general public access. Additional consideration is given for projects that feature model stormwater practices, water conservation, re-use of brownfield sites and other environmentally beneficial aspects of projects. Funding projects in urban neighborhoods that lack adequate access to parks is a program priority, as is development of parks near public transit.

“In keeping with Governor Patrick’s desire to provide recreational opportunities for urban populations, we gave special consideration this year to projects that will stabilize city neighborhoods and help revitalize urban centers,” EEA Secretary Ian Bowles said. “Funding for municipal parks is a key component of the Governor’s plan to invest at least \$50 million annually in land conservation over the next five years.”

Among the 21 grants announced today, ten are on along rivers and harbors in downtown areas, four involve stormwater improvements, four will renovate ballfields, nine will install new playgrounds or water spray play areas and two will be located on former brownfield sites.

This year’s grant cycle began in April, with applications due to EEA on July 31. Following a review process, the following projects were selected for funding over two years:

Barnstable, Pleasant Street Acquisition Project: \$294,300

- This new park will link to the harborfront through a harborwalk, creating a walking path that will benefit the town economically, a new stormwater recharge system to reduce runoff into the harbor, and informational kiosks for visitors.

Brockton, GAR Park Renovation: \$118,888

- Renovation of a plaza beside City Hall will restore landscaping, add new benches and lighting, and help create a pedestrian-friendly area.

Brockton, New Soccer Field at Snow Park: \$245,000

- The construction of a new soccer field and amenities will add facilities to accommodate this locally-popular sport.

Cambridge, Cambridge Common Playground: \$270,000

- Renovating this playground will upgrade disabled access, add a water play feature to an area of the city lacking this amenity, and update fencing, furniture, signage, and lighting.

Chelsea, Creekside Commons: \$493,160

- A developer donated an acre of land next to Chelsea Creek to build this new facility that will serve as an intergenerational park featuring bocce courts and horseshoe fields for senior citizens living nearby, as well as park components for children.

Dennis, Seaview Playland Park: \$261,464

- This new park is in a neighborhood in need of more tourist amenities. The site includes walking trails, educational signage, a playground, a public gathering space, and an osprey nesting pole.

Easthampton, Lower Mill Pond Park: \$200,600

- An acquisition of four acres will add to the overall size of this park and include the construction of a new pavilion/amphitheatre and a new restroom facility.

Fitchburg, Coolidge Park Renovations: \$500,000

- The project includes stormwater management improvements to reduce runoff into the adjacent river, as well as the addition of a new play area, improvements to the entrance drive and parking areas, and new plantings.

Greenfield, Green River Swim Area Rehabilitation: \$207,267

- The renovations planned for the site will greatly improve disabled access and add recreational amenities to the swim area.

Holyoke, Jones Ferry River Access Center: \$500,000

- The site will be renovated to create a smaller parking lot, reducing on runoff into the Connecticut River. The boat ramp will be resurfaced, improvements will be made to the lawn areas and landscaping, and a handicapped accessible boat house will be added.

Lawrence, Covanta Site Park: \$500,000

- The current brownfield site will be cleaned up to make it appropriate for a park facility, and active and passive recreation areas will be developed. The Spicket Riverwalk will be extended along the site, and new benches, landscaping, and amenities will be included.

Lowell, Concord River Greenway: \$500,000

- The park will provide public access to the Concord River, and connect the park to the downtown area. A bridge to Centennial Island will also be constructed.

Malden, MacDonald Stadium Rehabilitation: \$500,000

- The installation of a synthetic, multi-purpose field will allow for year round enjoyment of this environmental justice neighborhood park.

Pittsfield, Wahconah Park Improvements Project: \$500,000

- Renovation of the site will improve stormwater drainage into the adjacent Housatonic River. The project includes renovation of the stadium, ballfield, and parking area.

Rockland, Rockland Golf Course: \$329,340

- The acquisition of a conservation restriction on this 74.3-acre golf course will protect remaining open space in town and prevent development of this site.

Salem, 15 Peabody Street Park: \$474,880

- The current brownfield site will be cleaned up to make it appropriate for a park facility that will serve as an anchor park for the harbor walk. It will include a playground, game tables, and a gazebo.

Somerville, Central Hill Memorial Park: \$494,942

- This grant will allow for thoughtful redesign of this park, which will add amenities such as a sustainable water feature, an ethno-centered herb garden, and interpretive programming for adjacent schools.

South Hadley, Beachgrounds Renovation Project: \$500,000

- The grant will enable the town to rededicate existing town-owned land to parkland, expanding the park by a quarter acre, adding a basketball court and additional parking, developing a water park/splash pad, and installing a new playground structure, bathhouse, lighting, irrigation, picnic tables, and fencing.

South Hadley, Ledges Golf Club Clubhouse Project: \$237,088

- A permanent clubhouse will be added, enabling the town to receive revenue from the site for its park fund.

Springfield, DeBerry Playground and Old Hill Lighting: \$252,000

- The project will allow for renovation of ballfields, installation of a basketball court, new site amenities, perimeter fencing, and additional lighting.

Worcester, Vernon Hill Park Renovation: \$455,000

- The project will provide for improved drainage and grading on the softball field. The project includes renovation of the little league field, play structures, swing sets, and walking paths; installation of benches; utility upgrades, and tree planting.

For more information on the Urban Self-Help Grants program, visit www.mass.gov/envir/dcs.

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